



## Bi-Weekly Drought Brief Monday, February 2, 2015

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### **CURRENT CONDITIONS**

**Recent Precipitation:** This January finished as one of the driest Januaries on historical record, with very little meaningful precipitation throughout the state. In the last week, a system of subtropical moisture moved in to produce less than one-quarter inch of precipitation over the southern half of California.

Below are precipitation totals (in inches) from Monday, January 26 through Monday, February 2, and year-to-date rainfall based on the water year cycle (October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015).

- **Bakersfield:** 0.05" (3.36")
- **Folsom Dam:** 0.00" (20.91")
- **Fresno:** 0.21" (3.40")
- **Hetch Hetchy:** 0.14" (8.82")
- **Los Angeles:** 0.03" (5.71")
- **Modesto:** 0.00" (7.40")
- **Oroville:** 0.00" (19.24")
- **Pacific House:** 0.00" (14.64")
- **Redding:** 0.00" (22.48")
- **Riverside:** 0.38" (2.88")
- **Sacramento:** 0.01" (9.32")
- **San Diego:** 0.06" (5.30")
- **Shasta Dam:** 0.00" (35.32")
- **Willits:** 0.00" (27.68")

**Precipitation Forecast:** A light amount of precipitation is expected along the north coast and far northern California through Wednesday. A wet pattern is developing that may bring rain toward the end of the week to Northern California and southern Oregon.

**Snow Survey:** The most recent [snowpack survey](#), conducted on January 29, recorded California snowpack at 12% of normal. A more [recent update](#) using automated devices shows snowpack at 22% of normal as of February 2.

**Reservoir Levels (% capacity):** California reservoirs have had only minimal storage increases over the last two weeks, due to an absence of major storms that generate inflows. Any recent gains in storage at these reservoirs have been minor, and are mainly due to limited continued runoff from the storms in early December. As the dry weather continues, the reservoirs fall further behind of their annual averages of water supplies.

[Reservoir Levels](#) as of January 29 remain low, including: Don Pedro 41% of capacity (59% of year to date average); Exchequer 6% of capacity (13% of average); Folsom Lake 46% of capacity (89% of average); Lake Oroville 41% of capacity (62% of average); Millerton Lake 36% of capacity (56% of average); New Melones 23% of capacity (40% of average); Pine Flat 13% of capacity (28% of average); San Luis 53% of capacity (68% of average); Lake Shasta 44% of capacity (66% of average); and Trinity Lake 36% of capacity (51% of average). An update of water levels at [other smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

**Fire Activity:** In 2014, CAL FIRE responded to almost 1,000 more wildfires than the 5-year average. Since the beginning of the year, CAL FIRE has responded to over 70 wildfires across the state. This past week, over 70 total acres burned on the El Dorado National Forest and 10 acres burned within the city limits of Pacifica. CAL FIRE continues to monitor the drought situation and prepare for the wildfire season ahead while maintaining staffing that meets the current threat. Should the need arise, CAL FIRE is positioned to augment staffing as required.

**Statewide Open Burn Ban Update:** CAL FIRE has lifted the outdoor burn bans across all 56 counties within the State Responsible Areas (SRA). Many counties still require permits, and daily fire and weather conditions will continue to dictate whether burning is permissible on any given day. The [burn ban](#), issued last July, prohibits certain outdoor burning in the SRA.

**Vulnerable Water Systems:** The State Water Board's [Drinking Water Program](#) continues to provide technical and funding assistance to several communities facing drinking water shortages and is monitoring water systems across the state to determine if new support is needed. As of this week, a total to date of \$14.8 million has been identified for specific emergency drinking water projects out of \$15 million appropriated in March 2014 for this purpose.

### **KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK**

- **State Water Board Warns of Water Curtailments if Dry Conditions Persist:** On Friday, January 23, the State Water Resources Control Board issued a notice of [potential curtailment](#) to more than 9,000 water rights holders that their water diversions may be curtailed in critically dry watersheds this year if conditions do not improve over the coming months. The notice also cautioned that senior riparian and pre-1914 water rights holders could potentially receive curtailment notices if the natural flow of water is not sufficient even after junior water rights holders have been curtailed.
- **DWR Plans for Possible Need of Delta Salinity Control Barriers:** On Friday, January 16, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) submitted an application to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a [permit to allow the temporary installation of rock barriers](#) in three channels of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, if weather remains exceedingly dry through spring. The emergency drought barriers limit saltwater intrusion, which minimizes the amount of water that must be released from upstream reservoirs to repel salt. An increase in saltwater in the interior Delta would contaminate water supplies for Delta residents and the 25 million Californians who rely on the federal and state water projects.
- **Agencies Taking Measures to Protect Winter-run Chinook, Preparing to Release Approximately 600,000 Fish:** On Monday, January 26, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) announced that approximately [600,000 hatchery-reared juvenile](#) winter-run Chinook salmon is anticipated to be released in early February. These juvenile salmon were produced from adults that were collected as a precautionary measure to offset anticipated in-river drought related mortality.

This is the second consecutive year that juvenile winter-run salmon have experienced extremely poor survival during incubation and/or emigration to the ocean, substantially impacting the winter-run population. A third consecutive year would have dramatic adverse effects on the population.

- **CDFA Awards \$5.8 Million to Assist Farmers in Second Phase of SWEEP:** On Wednesday, January 21, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) awarded \$5.8 million to 70 different projects in the second phase of the [State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program \(SWEEP\)](#) to implement on-farm water irrigation systems that reduce water and energy use, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Funding for SWEEP was enabled by emergency drought legislation (SB 103) signed in early 2014 by Governor Brown, which authorizes CDFA to distribute as much as \$10 million for eligible projects.
- **Emergency Food Aid, Rental and Utility Assistance:** The Department of Social Services (CDSS) has provided to date over 476,300 boxes of food to community food banks in drought-impacted counties. Approximately 416,700 boxes of food have been picked up by 220,407 households. By this Friday, February 6, an additional 9,817 boxes will be delivered to five counties. Local food banks continue to target food aid to residents most impacted by drought.

The non-profit group La Cooperativa continues to distribute the \$10 million state-funded emergency rental assistance to impacted families and individuals across counties most impacted by the drought. As of Thursday, January 29, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reported that a total of \$8,488,463 is committed; and \$7,205,673 in funds has been issued to 4,421 applicants in 21 counties.

The Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) created a \$600,000 program to help families pay their water bills. This program targets families through 10 agencies that are experiencing “exceptional” drought. As of Friday, January 9, CSD has completed the Drought Water Assistance Program Pilot.

CSD has also implemented a \$400,000 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) drought assistance program, in coordination with the California Human Development (CHD), Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC), Center for Employment Training (CET) and Proteus, which provides assistance in employment training and placement services to individuals impacted by the drought. As of Friday, January 16, 128 clients are enrolled in employment training programs, 26 clients have obtained employment, and 128 clients are receiving employment support services. CSD has also reported that a total of \$394,653 has been spent to assist participants in completing training employment programs.

- **Support for Small Communities:** DWR has contracted with the California Rural Water Association (CRWA) to provide drought-related technical assistance to small community water systems. As directed by DWR, CRWA will conduct a site visit to a drought affected small system to assess its status and offer assistance in preparing a water conservation plan or drought contingency plan, or preparing financial assistance applications to available State and federal programs.
- **Water Saving Tips Promoted Across the State:** Californians made strides in 2014 to save water during one of the worst droughts in generations. For 2015, [SaveOurWater.com](#) urges Californians to make a New Year’s resolution to save water daily as a permanent lifestyle change. Save Our Water’s newly revamped website makes it even easier for Californians to learn how to save water indoors, outdoors, and at work. The website features the theme “Conservation: California’s Year-Round Resolution.” Visitors can sign up for daily email tips and grow the public awareness campaign by sharing Save Our Water [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) feeds.

This campaign will expand beyond the general public to feature corporate and business efforts. Save Our Water is also building an easy-to-use digital water calculator, to be unveiled in March that will help people figure out how much water they currently use and how certain practices could cut that volume both indoors and outdoors. DWR and ACWA will update the State Water Resources Control Board on Save Our Water activities at the Board meeting on Tuesday, February 3.

- **Sacramento Region Reduces Water Use by Nearly 20% in 2014:** On Tuesday, January 27, the Regional Water Authority (RWA) announced that its' customers in Sacramento, Placer, El Dorado and Yolo counties [cut water use by 19.3% overall in 2014](#), saving 30 billion gallons of water compared to 2013. The 19.3% conservation rate aligns with Governor Brown's call last year for Californians to reduce water usage by 20%.
- **Drought Response Funding:** The \$687 million in state drought funding that was appropriated last March through emergency legislation, as well as \$142 million provided in the 2014 Budget Act, continues to advance toward meeting critical needs. To date, \$227 million has been expended, and nearly \$625 million of the emergency funds appropriated in March came from sources dedicated to capital improvements to water systems. Since March, the Department of Water Resources has expedited grant approvals, getting \$21 million immediately allocated to grantees that were pre-approved for certain projects. As planned in March, the next \$200 million of expedited capital funding was awarded in October, and the remaining \$250 million will be granted by fall 2015. The 2014 Budget Act appropriated an additional \$53.8 million to CAL FIRE over its typical budget to enhance firefighter surge capacity and retain seasonal firefighters beyond the typical fire season. In the event drought conditions continue through next year, the proposed 2015-16 Governor's Budget includes an additional \$115 million to continue critical drought response efforts.
- **Governor's Drought Task Force:** The Task Force continues to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought.

### **Local Government**

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 60 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
  - **24 Counties:** Glenn, Inyo, Humboldt, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Modoc, Plumas, Santa Barbara, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Sutter, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yuba, and El Dorado.
  - **13 Cities:** City of Willits (Mendocino County), City of St. Helena (Napa County), City of Calistoga (Napa County), City of American Canyon (Napa County), City of Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara County), City of Montague (Siskiyou County), City of Live Oak (Sutter County), City of San Juan Bautista (San Benito County), City of Lodi (San Joaquin County), City of Portola (Plumas County), City of Ripon (San Joaquin County), City of Rio Dell (Humboldt County), and City of West Sacramento (Yolo County).

- **9 Tribes:** Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Yurok Tribe (Humboldt County), Tule River Indian Tribe (Tulare County), Karuk Tribe (Siskiyou/Humboldt Counties), Sherwood Valley Pomo Indian Tribe (Mendocino County), Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation (Yolo County), Cortina Indian Rancheria (Colusa County), Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria (Sonoma County), and Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians (Madera County).
- **14 Special Districts:** Brooktrails Township (Mendocino County), Lake Don Pedro Community Services District (Stanislaus County), Placer County Water Agency (Placer County), Twain Harte Community Services District (Tuolumne County), Carpinteria Valley Water District (Santa Barbara County), Meiners Oaks Water District (Ventura County), Mariposa Public Utility District (Mariposa County), Goleta Water District (Santa Barbara County), Montecito Water District (Santa Barbara County), Tuolumne Utilities District (Tuolumne County), Mountain House Community Service District (San Joaquin County), Nevada Irrigation District (Nevada County), Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Los Angeles County), and Lake Berryessa Resort Improvement District (Napa County).
- **Water Agency Conservation Efforts:** The Association of California Water Agencies (AWCA) [has identified](#) several hundred local water agencies that have implemented water conservation actions. These water agencies [are responding to the drought](#) by implementing conservation programs, which include voluntary calls for reduced water usage and mandatory restrictions where water shortages are worst.
- **County Drought Taskforces:** A total of 29 counties have established drought task forces to coordinate local drought response. These counties include: Butte, Glenn, Humboldt, Imperial, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Monterey, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yolo.
- **Tribal Taskforce:** A total of 3 tribes have established drought task forces to coordinate tribal drought response. These tribes include: Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Yurok Tribe (Humboldt Counties) and Sherwood Valley Tribe (Mendocino County).

## **DROUGHT RELATED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION**

### **[Drought.CA.Gov](#): California's Drought Information Clearinghouse**

State's Water Conservation Campaign, [Save our Water](#)  
Local Government, [Drought Clearinghouse and Toolkit](#)

California Department of Food and Agriculture, [Drought information](#)

California Department of Water Resources, [Current Water Conditions](#)

California Data Exchange Center, [Snow Pack/Water Levels](#)

California State Water Resources Control Board, Water Rights, [Drought Info and Actions](#)

California Natural Resources Agency, [Drought Info and Actions](#)

State Water Resources Control Board, Drinking Water, [SWRCB Drinking Water Program](#)

California State Water Project, [Information](#)

[U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for Current Conditions throughout the Region

[U.S. Drought Portal](#), National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS)

National Weather Service [Climate Predictor Center](#)

USDA Drought Designations by County [CA County Designations](#)

USDA Disaster and Drought Assistance Information [USDA Programs](#)

U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance Office: [www.sba.gov/disaster](http://www.sba.gov/disaster)